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ABSTRACT

A case study, in which a school of education increased scholarly production among its faculty members, is reported. The changes took place over a five-year period, and statistics are given for the trends which have developed from these changes. Background information is presented about Gallaudet College (District of Columbia) and the state of scholarly production among faculty members before implementation of the strategies to increase faculty projects. Changes made in the organizational value systems, faculty credentials, program credentials, publications, papers and presentations, professional involvement, and morale are detailed, as are the results of the changes. Strategies through which the changes were implemented are also discussed including: (1) monitoring and reporting; (2) planning; (3) clear communication; (4) leadership by example; (5) positive reinforcement; and (6) organizational and technical support. The paper concludes that the combination of these strategies resulted in increases in faculty grant production, research activity, paper presentations, and publications over a five-year period. (CB)

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STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING SCHOLARLY PRODUCTIVITY IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

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STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING SCHOLARLY PRODUCTIVITY IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

Since the beginning of the reform movement that began in 1983, schools and colleges of education have been targeted for criticism by the media, political leaders, the general public, colleagues in other disciplines, and their central administrations. Although these criticisms have often been based on inaccurate information, misperceptions, or historic biases, some of them, unfortunately, are justified. If we are honest with ourselves we must admit that many education faculties doe not compare favorably with their colleagues in other disciplinary areas in terms of academic esteem and scholarly productivity. Of the fifteen or twenty university presidents and VPAAs I have spoken with during the past year, few are satisfied with the achievement level of their schools of education. In some instances the education unit was viewed as a source of embarrassment to an otherwise excellent university.

This situation can and must be changed. Departments, schools and colleges of education can be among the most productive and respected units on their campuses. Among the areas of change spotlighted by our convention theme, this area, in my opinion, is foundational and prerequisite to other desired changes. It is also probably the most difficult. Can it be done? If so, how?

A CASE STUDY

Let's look at one school of education that changed--changed its value system, its level of productivity, and its image. I will share with you the nature of the changes effected in our education faculty over a five-year period from 1979 to 1984, and the strategies employed to produce them.

(I realize that there are risks involved in this type of presentation. First, when "before and after" situations are described, there is always the danger of seeming to be critical of the faculty and administrators who served during the period prior to these changes. That is certainly not my intention. In recounting positive changes, one also risks appearing to be immodest. Although I am very proud of what has been accomplished in our school, my purpose is not to boast, but to illustrate the fact that schools of education can change their nature and their image--an objective central to the reform movement and to the theme of this conference. I assume these risks with the sincere hope that some of you who are involved in similar efforts on your own campus may be helped or encouraged by our experiences.)

BACKGROUND

Our institution, founded as a liberal arts college in 1864, enrolled approximately 1400 students in 1979, 1800 in 1984, and 2000 during the current year. It had a strong liberal arts tradition with emphasis on teaching. Research and publications were neither required of the teaching faculty anywhere in the college nor were they particularly recognized or rewarded. Although graduate programs at the masters and doctoral levels had been established--most during the 1970s--the dominant force in the culture of the campus was the value system of the undergraduate faculty, by virtue of their superior numbers, enrollments, and history. Until 1979 the traditional small college organizational model was in place, with all departments reporting to a single campus dean. Professional education programs were scattered among several separate, autonomous, and very independent departments.

With a reorganization in 1979, a vice-presidency for academic affairs was created and the departments of the institution were grouped into three newly

established schools. Four pre-existing departments (Administration, Counseling, Education, and Physical Education) with thirty full-time faculty became the School of Education and Human Services (SEHS), and I became its first dean in August of 1979.

ASSUMPTIONS

My task of developing the new unit into a scholarly, productive professional school was begun with the following assumptions:

Assumption 1. It is desirable, appropriate, and obligatory for the institution to develop the characteristics embodied in the traditional definition of the word "university."

Assumption 2. A high level of performance should be expected of the faculty in the areas of research and scholarly productivity, professional service, and teaching. As von Humboldt posited in his concept of "the unity of teaching and research," each enhances the other, and each is essential to the other.

Assumption 3. Schools and colleges of education should be...AND CAN BE... equal or superior to other campus units in academic distinction and the quantity and quality of scholarly productivity without diminishing their effectiveness in discharging their clinical, service, and instructional responsibilities.

Assumption 4. Every faculty member has the capacity for greater productivity.

Assumption 5. If an administrator is sensitive to human needs and observes laws that govern change, change can be accomplished with a minimum of trauma. (Values and behaviors are more effectively

changed by the use of participative decision-making, incentives, modelling, and positive reinforcement, than by administrative mandate, threat, or fear.)

Assumption 6. There will always be some faculty members, usually tenured during an earlier period when different criteria were operative, who will not change.

CHANGES EFFECTED IN THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES

The following "before and after" data show the results obtained, during the five-year period from 1979-1984, by establishing specific objectives and implementing strategies for increasing scholarly productivity in the School. During this time two new departments were created and the number of faculty increased to a total of 72 or 46.5 full-time equivalent.

Changes in the Organizational Value System:

1979: Teaching was perceived to be the primary, and only essential, faculty responsibility. Although the institution heavily supported research in a separate Research Division, research and publications had not been expected or particularly valued in the teaching faculty. Collegiate Faculty Guidelines specifically prohibited the denial of promotion or tenure on the basis of scholarly productivity. Because faculty without terminal degrees had been tenured and promoted in the past, many did not perceive the doctorate as essential to a successful career in the institution. Beginning in AY 1979-80, scholarly productivity was introduced as a valued criterion in SEHS faculty action recommendations.

1984: The majority of SEHS faculty had come to embrace traditional university values, and they played a significant leadership role in the

revision of Collegiate Faculty Guidelines to reflect those values. Terminal degrees and scholarly productivity had become established values in SEHS departments in the processes of faculty recruitment, promotion, and tenure recommendations.

Changes in Faculty Credentials:

1979: Forty-five percent of SEHS faculty had doctorates.

1984: Seventy-eight percent held doctorates and an additional ten percent were enrolled in doctoral programs in neighboring institutions.

Changes in Program Credentials:

1979: No programs had sought or received state approval; one program was NCATE accredited but did not meet current standards for reaccreditation. There were also a number of gaps and overlaps in the curriculum.

1984: There were fifty-eight involvements by SEHS faculty in various research projects during AY 83-84, with a four-year average of sixty-one per year. During the last three years of the five-year period, forty-two percent of all research and training grant proposals processed by the campus Office of Sponsored Research were written by SEHS faculty, although SEHS faculty constituted less than a quarter of the total faculty.

Increases in Publications:

1979: The full-time faculty that became the School of Education and Human Services produced nine publications during AY 78-79.

1984: Ninety-three books, book chapters, and journal articles were published by SEHS faculty during AY 83-84, and many additional publications were in press or preparation. During the five-year period, SEHS faculty produced a total of 401 publications. (Although new faculty appointments

contributed to this increase, teaching faculty appointed before the beginning of the period account for the majority of scholarly products--as much as two-thirds in at least one particular year.)

Increases in Papers and Presentations:

1979: Fifty-three papers and presentations were presented, primarily in deafness-related conferences.

1984: During AY 83-84, SEHS faculty made 217 presentations throughout the United States and abroad. These included papers presented at nearly every major association's national convention as well as special education-oriented conferences. Nine faculty members reported research at the national AERA convention, and a number were invited presenters at international conferences outside the United States.

Changes in the Scope of Professional Involvement:

1979: The scope and degree of involvement in learned societies and professional associations varied by department; most relationships were with associations related to special education and/or deafness.

1984: By the end of AY 82083, there were 126 faculty memberships in professional associations and learned societies, and the scope had been expanded to include every major mainstream association. Fourteen faculty held leadership positions as national committee members, board members, or officers; three held national presidencies. Four national and international scholarly conferences were sponsored on campus by SEHS during that year, a practice that was established in 1981 with one conference, and continues to be encouraged and supported.

Changes in Morale:

1979: Faculty morale was very poor following the reorganization that had not been welcomed by many members. Departments that had been autonomous and independent (two had been established in the nineteenth century) found themselves subsumed under the new school.

1984: Although the normal discomfort one would expect during the process of change did indeed exist, particularly during the early years, by the end of 1984 faculty morale was high, open lines of communication and trust had been established both horizontally and vertically, ownership and identity with the School was felt through a democratic committee structure, and a sense of pride in their School was widespread in the faculty.

STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO PRODUCE CHANGE

The strategies for achieving these changes were not particularly new or unusual, and, in my opinion, they can be replicated in any institution with similar results. Although some require financial resources that may not be available in other situations, most of them do not.

Planning

Changes like the ones recounted above do not happen by accident. They were made to happen. They were planned changes. The school as it would look in 1984 was envisioned in 1979. A planning process was designed and established at that time which involved department heads and the entire faculty in the development of a five-year master plan. Specific, measurable, time-bounded objectives were included for every aspect of the development of the school, including faculty productivity and professional development. The plan was printed, nicely bound, widely disseminated, revised annually, and,

most importantly, monitored constantly. The dean developed personal administrative objectives and objective achievement plans annually and led the department chairs to do likewise.

Monitoring and Reporting

An annual faculty reporting system was developed and a data base was established. The demoralization that often accompanies efforts to increase research and publishing was avoided by collecting data on every aspect of faculty activity--advising load, supervision of practica, school visits, field contacts, campus and professional committee responsibilities, etc. Although common in other institutions, this was new for our faculty and the recognition by the administration of their myriad of valuable non-scholarly contributions eliminated or reduced the temptation to complain that "ONLY research and publications are recognized and valued here."

The collection of data on scholarly productivity was essential for monitoring progress toward those objectives. As annual reports on productivity were published showing objectives dramatically exceeded, momentum, as well as enthusiasm and pride, grew.

Clear Communication of Values and Expectations

The process of replacing an old value system with a new one began by clearly communicating the new values and expectations. The first issue of the in-house newsletter included a section with the head "IN PRINT" followed by a large expanse of empty space. The subsequent reporting of research efforts and publications in the school newsletter conveyed to the faculty the value placed on them. Also individual faculty were encouraged to write or to tackle a research project through low-key personal conversations. Department chairs,

search committees, and rank and tenure committees were asked to include criteria for scholarly performance in their deliberations. The practice of requiring the submission of copies of publications and other documentation of scholarly activity along with faculty action recommendations was established, and it soon became evident that these were actually read by the Dean and considered important. Department chairs and rank and tenure committees began to apply the new criteria, and the necessity for administrative intervention soon diminished. As new faculty were recruited, committees screened applicants for scholarly productivity and expectations were made very clear to new appointees, who received candid feedback annually on their progress toward tenure.

During the five-year period, one tenured faculty member was reassigned as staff, two pre-tenure members were denied tenure, and two or three had promotions postponed or denied. However, these recommendations were either made or supported by their peers, so the trauma was minimal and localized. The message, on the other hand, was received. Never, at any time, was a threatening "publish or perish" policy formally implemented. However, scholarly productivity soon became clearly established in the value system in the school.

Infusion of New Faculty Models

A number of excellent scholars, who were already on campus working in research labs and centers without departmental affiliation, were brought into SEHS and given faculty appointments. We were also able to fill new and vacated positions with strong productive scholars. Through their interaction with other faculty, their service on committees, and their example, new faculty reinforced the new value system.

One-to-One Mentoring

From the beginning, I considered it important to take time with individual faculty members, particularly younger unpublished ones, to discuss ideas for articles, identify target publications and markets, share book prospectuses, etc. The mentoring process is now widespread, with one faculty member helping another with statistical designs, computer applications, or other problems. Often people with complementary skills will collaborate on projects.

Leadership by Example

Credibility and example are essential to effective administrative leadership. During the five-year period the fact that the Dean found time to publish two books, two book chapters, a research monograph, and three articles was not lost on the faculty, and helped to lay the "I don't have time" excuse to rest.

Faculty Development

The faculty development program begun during the first year gave impetus to faculty writing for publication. A panel of editors from education journals presented a workshop on writing for professional journals. Another workshop with textbook editors from major publishing houses took faculty through the nuts and bolts of writing and submitting books for publication.

Visiting scholars were also brought in for regularly scheduled brown bag lunches and occasional lectures to stimulate research ideas and to provide modelling and inspiration.

Positive Reinforcement

One of the most important factors in behavior modification, as you well know, is positive reinforcement. We made it a point to know what the faculty

was doing and to express praise and appreciation for every scholarly effort made by them. Each individual accomplishment resulted in a personal letter from the dean (with copies to the provost and president) congratulating them and making positive comments about specific parts of their article, book, or project. A number of faculty have commented that they were encouraged by the fact that someone knew and cared about what they were doing and believed that it was important. Positive reinforcement was also provided through merit increases and specific laudatory comments by the dean on faculty action forms. Accomplishments were also publicized in school and campus publications.

Two additional reinforcing strategies discussed by not yet implemented would, I think, also be helpful. The first, a system of awards (accompanied by something tangible to be hung on the wall) presented at an annual banquet. Also, a display of all the publications of each school's faculty in a prominent place in the library for a month or a semester would give visitors and campus colleagues a greater appreciation of what other faculties are producing.

Organizational and Technical Support

Every possible effort was made to identify and remove the obstacles that inhibited faculty productivity, and to create a facilitative organizational environment.

A ratio of one departmental secretary for every four faculty members was maintained, and central word processing services were established to facilitate manuscript and proposal preparation. More recently micro-computers with word processing programs have been widely deployed for faculty use.

An assistant dean for technical assistance services was appointed. In addition to other duties he provided training and assistance for proposal

writers, and established and maintained links with the campus Office of Sponsored Research and the college Development Office.

Computer printouts of RFPs and new legislation, taken from a national computer network database (SpecialNet), were distributed by the dean's office to departments each week.

Released time was provided for faculty research and publication projects. Chairs were encouraged to find a way to do this intra-departmentally, and special funds in the Provost's Office and in the Research Division were also often utilized.

To provide incentives to departments to allow diversion of their colleagues' time, salary and operating monies replaced by grant funds were left in the departmental budgets.

Adequate financial support was provided in departmental budgets for travel to professional conferences. This was supplemented by grant funds as well.

CONCLUSION

These strategies worked for us. Perhaps you have gotten an idea or two that will be useful in your situation back home. It is tremendously rewarding to see a School of Education become a scholarly and productive unit that adds to the strength and stature of its institution and mades significant contributions to the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

If we are to change the image of our professional schools and colleges of education throughout the nation, earn the respect and support of our institutions, and reclaim our rightful leadership role in educational reform, it behooves us all to raise our expectations for education faculties.

Vocational training belongs in trade schools and community colleges. University schools and colleges of education should be productive scholarly academic units.